

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) announced today that he has secured \$475,000 in congressionally-directed funding for renovations to St. Elizabeth's Medical Center and programs to help individuals with autism at the Kelberman Center, both located in Utica.

"I'm pleased to see taxpayer dollars return home to improve health care delivery services that are a vital component of maintaining a high quality of life in Oneida County," said Arcuri. "Modernizing and renovating the St. Elizabeth's Medical Center Emergency and Trauma Center is a necessary step to keep our community healthy. Access to life-saving technology and necessary health care infrastructure is a critical part of improving the quality of life in our area. This project will create over 100 local jobs, both construction and clinical - building our economy where we need it most. I will continue to help local communities and work at the federal level to improve health care and foster economic development."

Arcuri secured \$400,000 for St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Utica for the expansion, modernization, and renovation of St. Elizabeth's Emergency/Trauma Center and Kitchen Cafeteria. The total capital project cost is \$13,129,432. The project will provide over 100 local jobs during the building process and a net gain of approximately 20 clinical jobs at the hospital.

Sister M. Johanna DeLelys, President and CEO of St. Elizabeth Medical Center expressed gratitude on behalf of the Sisters of St. Francis, the St. Elizabeth Staff, the physicians and the Community at large. "We are all appreciative of Congressman Arcuri's leadership and support of securing funding for this capital project. His efforts demonstrate his commitment to keeping our community healthy, strong and vibrant. In 2006, the Emergency Department cared for more than 25,000 people and this year the Trauma Center will celebrate its 20th year serving patients from our Central New York Communities."

A two-story addition will be constructed in an adjacent ambulance yard at the southeast corner of the Medical Center's main building. The first floor will contain approximately half of the new Emergency Department while a new kitchen facility will occupy the second story. The old kitchen will be renovated for the second half of the new emergency department and the old emergency department will be converted to a new cafeteria and serving area.

Arcuri also secured \$75,000 for the Kelberman Center, an affiliate of Upstate Cerebral

Palsy, in Utica to develop additional programming for individuals with autism disorders and expand existing programs for pre-school and school age children.

“As we learn more about the spectrum of autism disorders and increasing numbers of children are diagnosed with autism, it is critical that we provide the resources necessary for local programs to provide our children who are diagnosed with autism the best possible services and care,” said Arcuri. “It is vital that we invest in the next generation. All children, especially those with special needs, should have access to the best possible programs.”

According to Louis Tehan, Executive Director of Upstate Cerebral Palsy, and Helen Stepowany, Executive Director of the Kelberman Center, “The support of Congressman Arcuri in securing this funding is greatly appreciated, marking an important milestone in the Kelberman Center’s journey to become a center of excellence in the area of autism services. With 67 children being diagnosed with autism every day, we cannot be aggressive enough in our efforts to provide optimal services to children, adults and their families who face the challenges of autism everyday.”

Autism spectrum disorder is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life. The result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain, the symptoms and characteristics of autism spectrum disorder can present themselves in a variety of combinations from mild to severe. Though estimates of the prevalence of autism today vary, it is generally believed that as many as 1.77 million Americans – children and adults – are thought to have autism today. Currently one in every 166 children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders annually making autism the second leading developmental disability.

The funding secured by Arcuri is part of the fiscal year 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, which was approved by the Appropriations Committee yesterday afternoon. The legislation is expected to be considered by the full House of Representatives next week and by the Senate in the coming weeks.

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